**Achievement First Brooklyn High School**

**Class of 2015 - Personal Statement**

**Name: Jamesha Griffin**

Sitting in a cramped desk in a small, colorful classroom in Brooklyn, trains rumbling by, I sat typing on a tiny Chromebook. I am a shy person in school. The shyness has no rationale: it randomly influences areas of my life whether I am in public or working in small groups. So in class I type away on the Chromebook, always taking on the role of the note taker and eagerly researching articles so that another member of my group can take on the role of presenting our findings to the rest of class. While public speaking can be a significant social advantage, I find it to be extremely difficult. Shy is as shy does and so I had grown to accept my shyness, and tended to stay quiet and observe my surroundings; until that fateful summer leading into senior year.

It was a new setting, definitely not the Brooklyn I knew. A tornado that went by the name, “Mandatory Internship prior to Graduation,” forced me to step out of my typically introverted self and transported me into an entirely new world. Instead of the Wonderful World of Oz, I was transported inside of a large skyscraper in the middle of the big city. It was a small room located on the 21st floor of a midtown high rise. It had an aroma of fresh carpet along with the lingering scents of industrial cleaning products. The conference room table and chairs were beautifully silhouetted against the floor-to-ceiling windows.

While in Manhattan I was completely out of my typical environment and comfort zone. I had boarded the J train that moved from dirty and unsafe stations to the polished E train station with freshly painted signs and plenty of working lights. I had finally arrived at McKinsey and Company. As I sat around the large, brown oval table for my first introduction to the business world our instructor Greg said, “There will be a presentation on Friday.” Like a tornado, these seven words forced me to land precisely on top of my shyness and smash it once and for all.

When my group was up for the presentation, I realized that my shyness had a cure: I had to believe in myself and get past my greatest fear. So I readied myself as my steps were numbered; I calmed my breathing and my eyes glanced over everyone in the room. I had prepared a script and memorized every last word. I made sure I had prepared the most effective research so that I could feel confident presenting it to the group. The time had arrived and there was no escape.The white and wide screen came running down, and the words to the introduction magically appeared. Slide1 , slide 2, slide 3, and here my slide came. I walked past the long,tan, and oval table and stood at the front of the room.Words began to exit my mouth, and I pushed through the discomfort. It wasn’t the best presentation, but my group still received positive feedback.

So no, I was not in my Kansas anymore. I was not in my neighborhood or my school, but it was imperative that the tornado took me out to experience life outside of my comfort zone. I anticipate the new opportunities that await in college. In college, my comfort zone will not exist. I wait in anticipation to see where I land next and the opportunities to work with new people from diverse backgrounds and take risks inside and out of the classroom that will help me continue to unlock my potential.